

COMPLETION REPORT

Comparison of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production between Vietnam and Japan, and a case study of Cotu People, central Vietnam

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According to many research works, it is clear that when local knowledge is left out of the planning and policy making process, the results are that the development is either less successful or, in some cases, disastrous. While western techno-scientific approaches are (in themselves) insufficient response to today's complex web of social, economic, political and environmental challenges. Every ethnic group has its key characteristics with regard to nature resources conservation and uses through their traditional knowledge and customary laws. Based on the formation of the ethnic group's ecological areas, the traditional culture, adaptation and local knowledge have been produced. These ecological and social factors play a key role in sustainable development. Viet Nam has a large population of ethnic minorities that tend to have appreciably higher concentrations of poverty than the country's Kinh majority. The minority groups also tend to be more concentrated in upland and mountainous areas, often with worse access to public services and lacking basic infrastructure. The Cotu people belong to one of the officially recognized ethnic minorities in Vietnam and account for 61,588 people in 2009. The Cotu people are the biggest ethnic minority group in central Vietnam. They have their own language and culture, and live in the mountains and natural forests of Quang Nam and Thua Thien-Hue provinces. Setting Hong Ha commune, A Luoi district located in Thua Thien-Hue province, Central Vietnam as the research site, this research has three following objectives, (1) literate review of indigenous knowledge in agricultural production between Vietnam and Japan, (2) understand real situation of agriculture activities and indigenous knowledge applied in agricultural production of Cotu people, Thua Thien Hue province, central Vietnam.

The literate review shows indigenous knowledge in upland Vietnam are rich and greatly varied - in every aspects of development including conserving nature, health protection, farming systems, plant and animal varieties. This reflects the vast differences in physical conditions and the different needs of different local people. Such knowledge and diversity have been developed and practiced over many centuries of local experiences. The literate review also shows that swidden agriculture including cropping systems, crop cultivation in swidden fields, the transition of swidden agriculture at the end of the disappearing stage, and the utilization of millet cultivated which was once practiced in Japan. The results show the average land area of each Cotu household in Hong Ha commune was $1,060.2 \pm 1,082.9 \text{ m}^2$, $1,721.9 \pm 1,678.1 \text{ m}^2$, $2,776.7 \pm 3,014.7 \text{ m}^2$, $7,687.6 \pm 5,737.8 \text{ m}^2$ and $34,329.2 \pm 64,918.5 \text{ m}^2$ including residential land, paddy, land for annual crops (cassava, corn...), perennial crops and forestry land, respectively. These lands were mainly sourced by reclaiming and inheritance. The main poultry and animals were chicken, duck, cow, pig and goat. Applying indigenous knowledge in agricultural production has been appreciated by the Cotu ethnic people and passed down from current to the next generation. These knowledge include the experience of selecting the land for cultivation of specific crops, selecting the terrain for breeding facilities, using local food for livestock, using the garden leaves for the treatment of animal and poultry and preserving for long-term using of seeds and meat. The research results can be used to support promulgation of policies related to Cotu people in the future.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

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Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)